

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
13 June 2002 (13.06.2002)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 02/046980 A3

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: G06F 17/60

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(21) International Application Number: PCT/DK01/00801

(22) International Filing Date:
30 November 2001 (30.11.2001)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/251,862 8 December 2000 (08.12.2000) US

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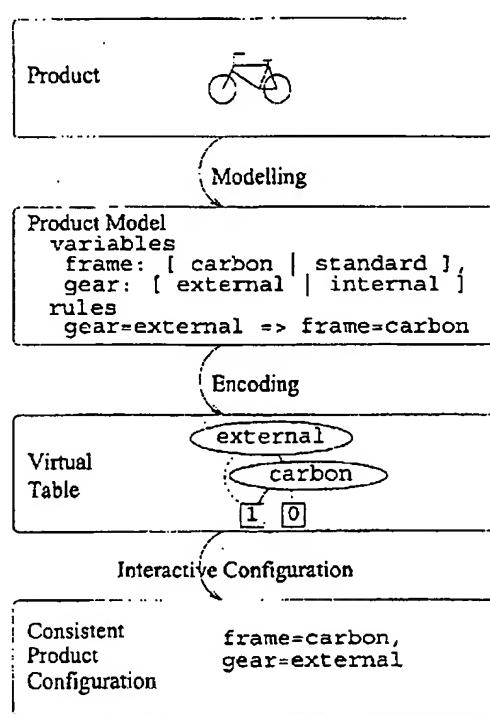
(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AT (utility model), AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, CZ (utility model), DE, DE (utility model), DK, DK (utility model), DM, DZ, IC, IE, EE (utility model), ES, FI, FI (utility model), GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU,

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(54) Title: A METHOD OF CONFIGURING A PRODUCT USING A DIRECTED ACYCLIC GRAPH



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(57) Abstract: A complex product is composed of several parts, where each part may depend on the other. As a consequence of these inter-dependencies, the selection of one part might exclude other parts from being included in the finished product. A *consistent configuration* is a selection of parts where all inter-dependencies are satisfied. A computer program for computer-assisted configuration helps an end-user to make choices that will lead to a consistent product. The preferred embodiment of the present invention, *Virtual Tabulation*, is a method for keeping track of inter-dependencies a large number of parts, to allow for the construction of an efficient and exact configuration program. Such a program allows interactive configuration over networks (e.g., the Internet). Another aspect of the invention, called *Smart Search*, allows a set of inter-dependencies among parts to be computed from a product database.



SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US,
UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) **Designated States (regional):** ARIPO patent (GH, GM,
KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW),
Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),
European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR,
GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent
(BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR,
NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:
— *with international search report*

(88) **Date of publication of the international search report:**
26 September 2002

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.